

July 22, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen  
Chief Administrative Officer

**STATUS REPORT ON CHILD HEALTH AND EDUCATION PASSPORT PILOT PROJECT**

On February 20, 2001, your Board instructed the Director of Children and Family Services in collaboration with the Chief Information Officer, Chief Probation Officer, Directors of Mental Health and Health Services, and the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for the design and implementation of Child Health and Education Passport System (CHEPS).
2. Assist the Chief Administrative Officer's Service Integration Branch (SIB) with the preparation of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for development and implementation of CHEPS, which shall be issued within 60 days; and assist SIB in developing the Advanced Planning Document (APD).

In addition, you instructed my office to oversee the development and implementation of CHEPS and to report back to the Board every 60 days regarding its progress. This is an interim status report on the development and implementation of the child health and education passport pilot project based on information received late Friday and today.

**Status**

My staff received the attached copy of the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) letter dated July 16, 2002, to the State Department of Social Services regarding their response to the April 4, 2002 submission of Los Angeles County's Implementation Advance Planning Document (IAPD) for the proposed Child Health and Education Passport (Passport). ACF has indicated they are unable to approve the development, implementation, and operation of the Passport and associated funding.

The following key critical factors were identified as the basis for their decision.

1. **Duplicate Functionality:** The Los Angeles County proposal duplicates information and functions that are required to be in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS).
2. **ACF's Twelve-Year Investment in CWS/CMS:** The investment of more than \$250 million over the last 12 years for the development and operation of CWS/CMS must be considered. The direct use of the CWS/CMS Health and Education Passport functionality that has already been funded would diminish significantly if the Passport were implemented in Los Angeles and throughout the remainder of California.
3. **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** The IAPD did not present a convincing business case that supported the investment in the Passport.
4. **Use of the Passport:** It appears that any benefits that the County might derive from the Passport's use presumes a minimum level of the Passport's utilization by up to 70,000 providers that are intended to use the system. Given the history of the significantly less than full use of CWS/CMS in California since its implementation, there is concern about approving the development and operation of any automated system which serves to further undermine the use of CWS/CMS.
5. **Software Ownership:** The County would acquire the Passport as a service through a vendor that has a preexisting passport application. The IAPD does not make a business case that shows acquiring the Passport, as a service will provide superior value to acquiring the Passport as a software application that is completely owned and controlled by the County, particularly when assessed over the complete system life cycle.
6. **Request for Proposals:** The County should issue a Request for Information prior to issuing an RFP to acquire sufficient information about cost, risks benefits, etc.
7. **Federal Funding and Cost Allocation:** The IAPD assumes a level of Federal funding that would not be available even if the project were to be approved. The enhanced funding at the 75 percent rate was only available during Federal Fiscal Years 1994-97, and was only applicable to a State's SACWIS, not to multiple auxiliary systems. The cost allocation schedule needs to include discussion of how Passport will ultimately be expanded to encompass a far broader range of programs and funding sources.

8. **State Involvement:** State involvement in the planning for the project or in the development of the IAPD is required, and the State must thoroughly consider the impact on and cost-effectiveness of such projects as related to other State and county systems.

ACF also indicated that they deferred providing comments on the RFP, since the IAPD did not present an acceptable solution for which they could provide any Federal funding at this time. However, in their detailed review comments of the IAPD that is attached to their July 16, 2002 letter, they indicated the following:

“We could support the modification of CWS/CMS to accommodate the new functionality and data expressed in the County’s IADP if the State submits a CWS/CMS long-term strategic technical plan that:

1. Is acceptable to us;
2. Utilizes an industry standard process to migrate CWS/CMS to a more modern, flexible, modular, and proven architecture, such as a browser based, n-tier architecture; and
3. Presents a strong business case to show the cost-effectiveness and business value of the proposed changes.

One caveat for our support is that California would have to clearly demonstrate such modifications to CWS/CMS were sought by many of its counties, and not driven exclusively by the interests of any one county.”

My staff also received the attached letter dated July 19, 2002, from the State Department of Finance (DOF), which indicates they have completed their review and are unable to support the Passport Pilot project at this time. Primary reasons identified included the following:

1. The project does not appear to meet the intent of the legislation, that it be a limited pilot project deployed in a subset of the County. It includes access to all caregivers and County health, education, and probation staff associated with the target foster child population rather than a smaller user population that is typical of pilot projects.
2. The pilot will merely automate a process that does not function properly. Consideration should be given to how business process re-engineering could be used to improve the process.
3. The readiness of all stakeholders and associated interfaces for accessing the pilot system as well as the impact to those stakeholders and interfaces including costs, staffing resources, and schedule should be described.

4. The pilot evaluation should include specific descriptions of what will be evaluated to determine if the project is successful; include measurable objectives that compare passport utilization, timeliness, accuracy, cost, and convenience against current process.
5. Tractability matrices linking legislative requirements to business requirements and functional requirements should be included.
6. Requirements and responsibilities of all parties should be included before initiating a competitive procurement.

### **Next Steps**

ACF indicated they would participate in a meeting or conference call with both State and County officials to discuss their response in more detail. My staff will work with involved agency representatives to clarify misconceptions and correct misinterpretations regarding the County's IAPD. As indicated in prior status reports, our proposed Passport approach was to competitively secure the services of a vendor with an existing technology service application that could be minimally customized to meet the County's needs and expeditiously implemented to improve access to critical health and education information. This approach would complement CWS/CMS rather than compete with it by providing an automated data entry mechanism for expanding the number of users who can access and update CWS/CMS health and education information. It would also enable the most up-to-date information to be shared in a secured environment ensuring congruency and accuracy of information among other County systems serving children.

My staff will work with the Director of DCFS to further assess the identified preferred approach to modify and web-enable CWS/CMS. This approach continues to be considered problematic given the history of protracted time frames associated with modifying CWS/CMS, competing SACWIS priorities, and system capacity, cost, and performance issues associated with expanding the number of direct CWS/CMS users.

### **Conclusion**

As instructed, my staff worked with involved agency representatives to develop a streamlined approach for securing needed resources to address the urgent issue of providing caretakers and service providers with critical health and education information for foster children in Los Angeles County. We will continue to move forward in support of enhancing the capability for service providers, child caregivers, and County staff to share and access updated health and education information that is essential to the safety, well-being, and survival of our children.

Each Supervisor  
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If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or your staff may contact Alisa Drakodaidis at (213) 974-2477.

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#### Attachments

c: Auditor-Controller  
Chief Information Officer  
County Counsel  
Department of Children and Family Services  
Department of Health Services  
Department of Mental Health  
Probation Department  
Los Angeles County Office of Education